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מכון ויצמן למדע

THE WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

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PROF. I. DOSTROVSKY

President

פרופ' י. דוסטרובסקי

נשיא

11th December, 1973

Professor Joshua Lederberg  
Dept. of Genetics  
Stanford University Medical School  
Stanford, Calif. 94305  
U.S.A.

Dear Professor Lederberg,

It has been a long time since I wrote to you last. Many things have happened since then to disrupt the normal flow of information, and also the normal way of life in the Institute and in Israel.

We missed your presence at the meeting of the Board of Governors last month. This was unusually well attended and the discussions were useful. Members of the Board were given the opportunity to have a first hand report on the military situation from General Gazit and also to visit some of the battle areas. I also reported on the situation in the Institute and about our plans for closer integration and involvement in problems arising from the continuing National Emergency. You must have received by now the 'Report from Rehovot' No.6 which contains a summary of the Board of Governors meeting.

So far the various predictions and estimates regarding the National Emergency and its impact made at the Board of Governors meeting have proved correct. The emergency situation will continue for many months to come and I don't think we have really begun to feel the full impact yet. The number of people serving in the forces has not changed significantly nor is it likely to change in the near future. Nevertheless, it was decided, in coordination with the other institutions of higher learning, to open the academic year of the graduate school on December 23, and to continue it through the summer of 1974. The dean of the graduate school and the various supervisors are making individual plans of study for each of our soldier-students and we hope that in this way the loss of time will be minimized.

The country has not faced a prolonged state of emergency since 1949, and it will require an extensive and painful readjustment in most aspects of our life. I personally am convinced that this adjustment can be made - there is just no

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alternative - and its success depends largely on the morale of the people. So our immediate attention must be directed to this matter. Among the factors which go into the makings of the morale of a people is the demonstration that its economic and cultural life is maintained in the face of adversity. The mere fact that the Institute, the country's highest research centre, continues to function effectively is already an important morale builder. It also increases the credibility of our ability to resist both enemy and 'friendly' pressures. In addition, by increasing the Institute's direct involvement in the solution of outstanding problems both short range and long term, we help bolster up our physical ability to withstand the long siege and the morale of the people.


This involvement of the Institute should not be confined only to scientific and technological problems but should also extend to community matters in our neighbourhood. In this way the Institute will not only be able to help solve many difficulties but will also be able to spread a spirit of confidence and determination.

The building program is proceeding very slowly even in the four projects which were approved by the Board. It is possible that with the resolution of the transportation difficulties in the near future, construction work will pick up speed.

On the more academic level, we have resumed the examination, interrupted by the war, of the regrouping of some of the scientific activities so as to increase the effectiveness of the Institute. In particular, we are now setting up an independent unit devoted to research in biological membranes. The leader of this group will be Professor Ora Kedem and the members will be drawn from the Departments of Polymers, Biophysics and Genetics. The optimal administrative framework for this new group is now being evolved.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,



I. Dostrovsky